

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8415

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 14540

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN

SUBJ: FOREIGN SECRETARY'S COMMENTS ON INDIA'S ASIAN POLICY

1. DURING CALL BY AMBASSADOR MARSHALL GREEN ON FONSEC KEWAL SINGH DECEMBER 10, FONSEC EMPHASIZED INDIA SAW NO PROSPECTS UNDER PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES FOR AGREEMENT AMONG ALL ASIAN STATES ON ASIAN SECURITY ISSUES OR ON ANY BROAD PAN-ASIAN ISSUES. COMMENT MADE IN CONTEXT OF AMB GREEN'S QUERIES ABOUT BREZHNEV SECURITY PROPOSAL AND AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM'S MUSINGS ON ASIAN COOPERATION. "ANY SUCH ACTIVITY WOULD BE DOOMED TO FAILURE AT THIS TIME," SAID KEWAL SINGH. HE SAID INDIANS HAD NOT EVEN ASKED SOVIETS TO ELABORATE ON THEIR CONCEPT OF ASIAN
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SECURITY BECAUSE THIS WOULD HAVE DISPLAYED MORE INTEREST

THAN INDIA FELT IN SUBJECT. EMPHASIZING THAT HE DID NOT DISCOUNT DESIRABILITY OF MORE COOPERATION AMONG ASIAN STATES, FONSEC SAID THIS COULD ONLY COME AS RESULT OF GRADUAL EVOLUTION.

2. FONSEC SAID INDIA HAD WELCOMED WHITLAM'S GREATER INTEREST IN INDIA, INDIAN OCEAN AND ASIA BUT FELT AUSTRALIA PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN ASIAN PACIFIC STATES, STARTING WITH INDONESIA AND MOVING UP TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA AND JAPAN, AND ONLY SECONDARILY IN INDIA AND SOUTH ASIAN AREA. HE SAW NO DIRECT RESULTS FROM WHITLAM VISIT IN TERMS OF GREAT INDO-AUSTRALIAN COOPERATION OTHER THAN GENERAL ATMOSPHERICS.

3. FONSEC SAID INDIA'S PRIMARY INTERESTS WERE IN IMPROVING AND MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONS WITH ITS IMMEDIATE NEIGHBORS. THESE ALREADY WERE GOOD WITH SRI LANKA, NEPAL, BANGLADESH, BURMA AND AFGHANISTAN. RELATIONS WITH IRAN WERE IMPROVING, AND HE THOUGHT THE TWO COUNTRIES NOW UNDERSTOOD EACH OTHER QUITE WELL. PAKISTAN REMAINED A PROBLEM (WHICH HE DID NOT GO INTO IN DETAIL) BUT HE WAS SURE THE PAKS HAD THE SAME SUSPICIONS OF INDIA THAT INDIA DID OF PAKISTAN. THE QUESTION WAS HOW TO OVERCOME THESE. INDIA WISHED TO HAVE GOOD TIES WITH OTHER ASIAN COUNTRIES BUT KEWAL SINGH WAS FRANK IN SAYING THESE WERE SECONDARY. HE SAID INDIAN RELATIONS WITH ALL SOUTHEAST ASIAN COUNTRIES WERE ALREADY GOOD. ASKED SPECIFICALLY ABOUT JAPAN WHICH HE DID NOT TAKE THE INITIATIVE IN MENTIONING, HE HESITATED AND MERELY SAID JAPAN WAS MORE DISTANT, IN THE PAST HAD CONCENTRATED MAINLY ON WHEN IT COULD GET OUT OF INDIA, BUT NOW APPEARED TO BE MOVING TOWARD A MORE UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDE TOWARD INDIA. HE DID NOT COMMENT SPECIFICALLY ON CHINA OR THE USSR AND HAD TO DASH OFF TO A CABINET MEETING (ON PL-480 RUPEES AMONG OTHER SUBJECTS) BEFORE AMB GREEN COULD RAISE SUBJECTS.

4. COMMENT: WE HAVE NOT HEARD FONSEC COMMENT SO FIRMLY AND EXPLICITLY ON PROSPECTS AND INDIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD ASIAN SECURITY OR OTHER BROAD COOPERATIVE CONCEPTS.
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